

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, EAID, JA
SUBJECT: MOL TAKES FIRST STEP TOWARDS PARTICIPATION
IN OVERSEAS AID PROGRAMS
1. MINISTRY OF LABOR (MOL) INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS
DIVISION STAFFER KIMATA CONFIRMED TO LABATT AUG 21
ACCURACY OF LAST WEEK'S NEWSPAPER REPORTS THAT MOL IS
HOPING TO LAUNCH NEXT YEAR FOREIGN AID PROJECTS IN THE
LABOR FIELD. KIMATA SAID THAT ON AUG. 14 MOL OFFICIALLY
REQUESTED MINISTRY OF FINANCE (MOF) TO AUTHORIZE INCLUSION
OF 300 MILLION YEN (APPROXIMATELY 1.6 MILLION DOLLARS)
IN ITS FY 79 BUDGET FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND LABOR
ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PAR-
TICULARLY IN EAST ASIA, AS WELL AS FOR GRANT AID TO
RECREATIONAL AND WELFARE PROJECTS FOR WORKERS UNDERTAKEN
BY LABOR UNIONS OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS IN THOSE
COUNTRIES. KIMATA SAID THAT WHILE ITS INITIAL BUDGETARY
REQUEST WAS EXTREMELY MODEST, MOL WAS INTERESTED AT
THIS TIME NOT SO MUCH IN THE AMOUNT OF AID BUT RATHER
IN WINNING MOF AND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS APPROVAL
OF CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE IN LABOR FIELD.
MOL WOULD BE SATISFIED EVEN IF MOF SANCTIONED ONLY 100
MILLION YEN THIS YEAR. KIMATA ADDED THAT BECAUSE MOL
EXPECTED MOF INITIALLY TO TAKE DIM VIEW OF ITS PROPOSAL,
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IT HAD GONE PUBLIC AS ONE WAY OF GENERATING NECESSARY
POLITICAL SUPPORT. JAPAN ECONOMIC JOURNAL RESPONDED
LAST WEEK WITH EDITORIAL PRAISING CONCEPT. WHEN SHOWDOWN
OVER FINAL BUDGET COMPILATION COMES IN LATE DECEMBER,
SENIOR MOL BUREAUCRATS ARE PREPARED TO TAKE THEIR CASE
TO THEIR "FRIEND IN COURT", DEPUTY CHIEF CABINET
SECRETARY AND FORMER VICE MINISTER OF LABOR DOSHO IN

HOPES THAT HE WILL PERSUADE PRIME MINISTER TO SUPPORT PROGRAM.

2. ACCORDING TO KIMATA, IF PROGRAM WINS APPROVAL OF MOF AND DIET THIS YEAR (AND MOL IS REASONABLY CONFIDENT IT WILL), IT WOULD BE ADMINISTERED BY JAPAN ILO ASSOCIATION, A TRIPARTITE (GOVERNMENT-MANAGEMENT-LABOR) BODY WHICH RECEIVES ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE FROM MOL. KIMATA SAID THAT MUCH OF INSPIRATION FOR MOL INITIATIVE DRAWN FROM US EXPERIENCE, PARTICULARLY DOLITAC AND AFL-CIO ADMINISTERED FREE LABOR INSTITUTES, AS WELL AS FROM WEST GERMAN PROGRAMS. KIMATA VENTURED PERSONAL OPINION THAT SUBJECT OF OVERSEAS SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD MAKE IDEAL AGENDA ITEM FOR MINISTERIAL TALKS WHEN SECRETARY MARSHALL VISITS TOKYO.

3. COMMENT: SINCE KIMATA IS MOL ACTION OFFICER FOR THIS INITIATIVE, HER ENTHUSIASM MAY POSSIBLY BLIND HER TO CUSTOMARY RELUCTANCE OF MOF TO APPROVE NEW PROJECTS OF OTHER MINISTRIES BEFORE THEY HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY STAFFED THROUGHOUT THE BUREAUCRACY. FOR EXAMPLE, IN CASE OF MOL'S NEW PROGRAM THIS FISCAL YEAR OF INVITING FOREIGN LABOR LEADERS TO JAPAN, IT TOOK ALMOST FIVE YEARS BETWEEN ORIGINAL MOL PROPOSAL AND DIET AUTHORIZATION. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS VERY MUCH IN USG INTEREST TO ENCOURAGE THIS INITIATIVE. NOT ONLY WOULD IT CONTRIBUTE TO EXPANSION OF JAPANESE OVERSEAS AID PROGRAMS, BUT IT

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ALSO SHOULD INVOLVE GOJ MORE DIRECTLY IN STRENGTHENING FREE LABOR MOVEMENTS, ESPECIALLY IN ASIA. MANSFIELD

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